INFORMATION IS FOR EVERYONE

Final Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People

October 2001

ISBN 0-919059-81-3

102-03941/

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

II. INTRODUCTION 7

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION 8

PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES IN SASKATCHEWAN 8
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION AND SPECIAL LIBRARIES 10
PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES FOR FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS PEOPLE ACROSS CANADA 11

IV. VISION 13

V. UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES 14

ESTABLISHING UNIVERSAL ACCESS 14
FUNDING UNIVERSAL ACCESS 15
THE MECHANICS OF UNIVERSAL ACCESS 16

VI. ON-RESERVE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE POINTS AND AGREEMENTS 17

VII. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND FUNDING 20

VIII. PUBLIC LIBRARY RELATIONSHIPS WITH FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS PEOPLE 21

ENHANCING PUBLIC LIBRARY RELATIONSHIPS WITH FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS PEOPLE 21
PROMOTION AND PRESERVATION OF ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES, CULTURES AND HISTORIES 22

IX. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING 25

FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY WORKFORCE AND IN GOVERNANCE 25
TRAINING FOR FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS PEOPLE AND STAFF 26
TRAINING FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY STAFF 30

X. DEVELOPMENT OF FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES 31

ABORIGINAL LIBRARY CONSULTANTS 31
COLLECTIONS 33
WEB SITE ON LIBRARY SERVICES FOR FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS PEOPLE 34
LITERACY 35
STORYTELLING WEEK 37
STRATEGIES FOR LIBRARIES – INNOVATIVE THINKING 38

IX. NEXT STEPS 41

APPENDIX A – LIST OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS 42

APPENDIX B - PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS PARTICIPANTS 43

APPENDIX C - ABBREVIATIONS 45

APPENDIX D – GLOSSARY OF TERMS 46

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People was established in 2001 to address two areas of concern regarding public library service for Aboriginal peoples. First, only a small proportion of First Nations' communities in southern Saskatchewan choose to join the public library system, creating barriers to providing library service for residents of non-participating communities. Also, public libraries are not attracting off-reserve First Nations and Métis people in numbers reflecting their proportion of the population.

The Advisory Committee was mandated to provide recommendations to address these concerns. Committee members, including representatives from libraries and First Nations and Métis institutions, identified ways to promote First Nations and Métis participation in, and commitment to, the development and maintenance of public library services for First Nations and Métis people.

The report of this committee is based on a two-part strategy for improving access to library services for Aboriginal peoples. Central to the committee's recommendations is the need to establish universal access to public library services in Saskatchewan, thereby allowing all Saskatchewan residents, including all who reside on First Nations reserve land, access to public library services. The committee recommends that the provincial grant pool for regional libraries be increased to reflect the expanding populations served by public libraries, due to new First Nations participation. The committee believes that First Nations should have ownership of, and primary responsibility for, on-reserve public libraries and public library services. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends that First Nations, with financial support from the federal government, be encouraged to negotiate further agreements with public library systems for additional on-reserve public library services.

The other part of this strategy, parallel to the establishment of universal access, is to achieve equitable access: library usage by Aboriginal people proportionate to their population. Equitable access can be fostered by the creation of a welcoming atmosphere and culturally appropriate services, programming and collections. Special project funding is needed for library systems to improve library services for First Nations and Métis people.

The committee advises libraries to strive to create a welcoming atmosphere for First Nations and Métis patrons. It is recommended that public library systems offer Aboriginal cultural awareness and sensitivity training, and encourage staff and board members to participate. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee recommends that the public libraries promote First Nations and Métis participation at all levels in the library workforce. The Advisory Committee recommends that the public libraries promote the importance of First Nations and Métis board members, including Elders in ex-officio positions. With these measures, public libraries will be more prepared to provide culturally appropriate services.

To prepare First Nations and Métis people for the public library workforce, it is recommended that post-secondary institutions, particularly the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT), and the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC), partner to establish and deliver library training

programs throughout Saskatchewan. In addition, the committee recommends that public libraries establish Aboriginal internship and mentoring programs for First Nations and Métis library students and staff. Also, it is recommended that public libraries work in conjunction with First Nations and Métis governments and organizations to provide training for all library staff in serving First Nations and Métis people.

The Advisory Committee recommends that two full-time permanent Aboriginal Library Consultant positions be established at Provincial Library to develop and improve library services for First Nations and Métis people, and be assisted by Aboriginal consultant positions at the regional and municipal libraries.

The committee recommends that public libraries undertake initiatives to assist in the promotion and preservation of Aboriginal languages, cultures and histories, including the development of collections of appropriate Aboriginal materials. It is recommended that Provincial Library develop an Aboriginal component to the Saskatchewan Libraries Web Site, with assistance from the Aboriginal Library Consultants. This web site will serve as a clearinghouse for Aboriginal materials and a network of support to improve public library services for First Nations and Métis people.

The committee encourages public libraries to form partnerships with the Government of Canada, and with First Nations and Métis institutions and organizations, to provide public library services for First Nations and Métis people. In particular, the Advisory Committee encourages First Nations and public library systems to co-operate in the establishment of on-reserve public library services and service points, which meet the needs of the community.

In the interest of promoting increased First Nation and Métis patronage, the committee recommends that public libraries be encouraged to promote literacy among First Nations and Métis people. As well, the Advisory Committee recommends the establishment of an official Storytelling Week in Saskatchewan to promote library services for First Nations and Métis people.

The Advisory Committee would like to see increased participation in the public library system by First Nations and Métis people. This can occur through the establishment of partnerships with First Nations and Métis organizations, institutions and communities, as well as through the promotion of the benefits of public libraries services. The committee recommends to the minister that an action plan be implemented to achieve progress on these recommendations and that it be reviewed in five years.

The committee believes that implementation of these recommendations is critical to the future of the public library system in our province and a key step in enriching lives of all residents of Saskatchewan.

List of Recommendations

1. That every resident of Saskatchewan, including all individuals who reside on First Nations reserve land, have access to the full range of existing public library services.

2. That the regional library funding formula be changed to include the population for on-reserve residents of First Nations within a regional library's service area.

3. That the provincial grant pool for regional libraries be increased so that no regional library is adversely affected by the population changes resulting from the inclusion of all First Nations people.

4. That the Government of Saskatchewan work with the Government of Canada to fund universal access to public library services for First Nations people.

5. That all Saskatchewan residents be able to obtain public library cards at any public library service point in the province and that libraries explore the technology available to provide that functional capability.

6. That the public library community of Saskatchewan work toward a standardized, province-wide, proof-of-residence for the purpose of obtaining library cards.

7. That First Nations have ownership of, and primary responsibility for, on-reserve public libraries and public library services, such as:
   - Stand-alone public libraries,
   - School-housed public libraries,
   - Bookmobiles or portable libraries,
   - Book exchanges, or
   - Computer access to library services with van delivery for books.

8. That partnerships be explored as a way to achieve First Nations bookmobile services.

9. That First Nations and public library systems be encouraged to negotiate agreements for further development of public library services, including on-reserve libraries.

10. That public library systems offer technical and developmental support to First Nations libraries, and ensure they are connected to the province-wide public library system.

11. That public library legislation and regulations provide sufficient flexibility to allow library systems to enter into an agreement with a First Nation with reserve land within the boundaries of two or more public library systems.

12. That the Provincial Library explore partnerships with Aboriginal governments to facilitate the development of public library services for First Nations and Métis people.

13. That funding for developing on-reserve public library services for First Nations be provided by the Government of Canada with assistance from First Nations governments.

14. That the Government of Saskatchewan make special project funds available to the public library community in Saskatchewan, and that these funds be designated for public library service initiatives addressing matters of interest and concern to First Nations and Métis communities.

15. That barriers to the use of public libraries by Aboriginal people be identified and processes put in place to systematically eliminate those barriers.

16. That public libraries work with the First Nations and Métis communities to evaluate the extent to which the libraries are welcoming, and that processes be put in place to encourage the libraries to provide a culturally appropriate and sensitive atmosphere.

17. That all public library systems provide Aboriginal cultural awareness and sensitivity training, and encourage their staff and board members to participate.

18. That public libraries support First Nations and Métis communities in the preservation of their oral traditions, Aboriginal languages, cultures and histories by establishing partnerships with First Nations and Métis groups and organizations to develop and offer culturally appropriate programming.

19. That public libraries develop collections that include Aboriginal content, such as: materials written in Aboriginal languages, materials in syllabics, the recordings of Aboriginal histories, and the stories told by the Elders, with their permission.

20. That public libraries engage First Nations and Métis Elders to participate in library programming.

21. That all public libraries, including those serving communities with few or no First Nations and Métis people, expose the general public to the histories, issues and concerns of First Nation and Métis people through collection development and programming.

22. That partnerships be formed between public libraries and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner in recognition of its role in public education about First Nations.

23. That public libraries encourage employment strategies that promote Aboriginal participation at all levels within the public library workforce.

24. That the value of First Nations and Métis board members be promoted through provincial initiatives in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association and the Provincial Library.

25. That there be Aboriginal representation on local public library boards proportionate to the local Aboriginal population.

26. That public library boards consider including a local Elder in an ex-officio position.

27. That union agreements and public library policies be reviewed and revised to include provisions to develop a representative and diverse workforce.

28. That public libraries work in conjunction with First Nations and Métis communities and post-secondary education institutions to create a library training program to meet the needs of First Nations and Métis students.

29. That a library technician program be offered in Saskatchewan, through various methods of distance education, and that courses offered be transferable to universities and technical colleges.

30. That public libraries work with the Saskatchewan Library Association to explore partnership opportunities to develop scholarships and bursaries for First Nations and Métis students to complete library training.

31. That public libraries explore partnership opportunities for joint conferences as forums for discussion on library services for First Nations and Métis people, and as training opportunities for Aboriginal public library staff.

32. That public libraries establish an internship program for First Nations and Métis students who are graduates of library technician and library science programs.

33. That public libraries establish a mentoring program to assist First Nations and Métis public librarians, and to promote cooperation between First Nations and Métis communities and the public library community.

34. That provincial initiatives be undertaken in conjunction with First Nations Chiefs, First Nations Councils, Métis Locals and Elders to offer workshops and training sessions for library staff members on providing services and outreach to First Nations and Métis people.

35. That Provincial Library establish full-time, permanent positions, designated for individuals of Aboriginal ancestry, for two Aboriginal Library Consultants, to act as central coordinators.

36. That Lakeland, Parkland, Southeast, and Wapiti regional libraries, Pahkisimon Nuye·áh Library System, Regina Public Library and Saskatoon Public Library each establish and maintain a full-time, permanent Aboriginal Library Consultant position, designated for an individual of Aboriginal ancestry, who would act as an implementation coordinator.

37. That on-reserve public library service points house collections of a quality and size similar to that of a regional branch library serving a comparable population.

38. That the public, regional, and northern libraries develop collections of Aboriginal materials reflecting the histories and cultures of the First Nations and Métis people of Saskatchewan, with particular emphasis on the First Nations and Métis people in that area.

39. That Aboriginal materials be available in every branch library in Saskatchewan and that rotating blocks be one of the mechanisms used to achieve this goal.

40. That Provincial Library and the Aboriginal Library Consultants compile a list of Aboriginal materials recommended and materials not recommended for public libraries, for posting on the Saskatchewan Libraries Web Site.

41. That Provincial Library develop an Aboriginal component to the Saskatchewan Libraries Web Site.

42. That public libraries work with the First Nations and Métis communities to promote and enhance literacy initiatives among First Nations and Métis people.

43. That an official Storytelling Week occur in February of each year throughout the province to promote First Nations and Métis oral traditions and the use of public libraries.

44. That public libraries be encouraged to be innovative and creative in planning and implementing strategies for improving library services for First Nations and Métis people.

45. That the minister direct the Provincial Library to work with the public library community and the Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples Committee, and any other appropriate groups, to develop an action plan to ensure progress in the implementation of these recommendations.

46. That in five years, there be a review of progress, that includes public consultations and a report to the minister.

II. INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2001, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Honourable Ron Osika, appointed the Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People. The committee was mandated to: identify ways to foster First Nations and Métis participation in, and commitment to, the development and maintenance of public library services designated to meet the library and information needs of all First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan (Refer to Terms of Reference, http://www.lib.sk.ca/staff/minaboriginal/termref.html).

The Advisory Committee was composed of representatives from libraries and First Nations and Métis organizations with an interest in the development of library services for First Nations and Métis people. (For list of committee members, see Appendix A.)

The Advisory Committee hosted a series of public consultations and discussions throughout Saskatchewan from May until August 2001. Meetings were held at Jackfish Lodge (Battlefords Provincial Park), Prince Albert, Beauval, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatoon and Regina.

Representatives from the First Nations, Tribal Councils, Métis Nation - Saskatchewan, public libraries and regional libraries were personally invited to attend the consultations. The consultations were advertised publicly through posters, local newspapers, and radio stations. (See Appendix B for a list of the participants.)

Representatives of the Advisory Committee spoke with Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) Directors of Education during their meeting at the end of June.

The committee also invited representatives from various organizations and government departments to speak with them about possible best practices and partnerships for libraries. The committee spoke with representatives from:

- Aboriginal Employment Development Program,
- Regional Intersectoral Committee,
- Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management Mentoring Program,
- Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT),
- Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST).

This report represents the recommendations of all members of the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee listened carefully to the issues and concerns from the public consultations and has framed its recommendations to address those concerns.

M121

IMPORTANT NOTE CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING PAGES

THE PAGES WHICH FOLLOW HAVE BEEN FILMED TWICE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE BEST REPRODUCTIVE QUALITY

USERS SHOULD CONSULT ALL THE PAGES REPRODUCED ON THE FICHE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A COMPLETE READING OF THE TEXT.

REMARQUE IMPORTANTE CONCERNANT LES PAGES QUI SUIVENT

LES PAGES SUIVANTES ONT ÉTÉ REPRODUITES EN DOUBLE AFIN D'AMÉLIORER LA QUALITÉ DE REPRODUCTION

LES UTILISATEURS DOIVENT CONSULTER TOUTES LES PAGES REPRODUITES SUR LA FICHE AFIN D'OBTENIR LA LECTURE DU TEXTE INTÉGRAL

Micromedia
ProQuest

20 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario M5C 2N8
Tel.: (416) 362-5211
Toll Free: 1-800-387-2689
Fax: (416) 362-6161
Email: info@micromedia.on.ca

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Public Library Services in Saskatchewan

A **library** is defined as any organized collection of printed books and periodicals or of any other graphic, electronic, or audio-visual materials, and the services of a staff to provide and facilitate use of such materials or of other information sources as are required to meet the informational, research, educational, cultural or recreational needs of its users.

A **public library,** as established under *The Public Libraries Act, 1996*, is supported by tax dollars and provides service to the population of a community or region free of charge to the individual. The American Library Association has defined the roles that a public library may play in a community and the most frequently chosen roles by public libraries in Saskatchewan are:

- encouraging young children to develop a lifelong interest in reading;
- providing recreational and popular reading materials;
- providing accurate and reliable information to meet daily living needs;
- supporting formal and informal education for lifelong learning; and
- serving as a community centre.

Also, under *The Public Libraries Act, 1996*, public libraries in Saskatchewan are organized into the **provincial public library system** to ensure universal access across the province and to facilitate the resource sharing which achieves maximum service at least cost.

Currently, there are two municipal libraries and seven regional libraries serving southern Saskatchewan, and the Pahkisimon Nuye·áh Library System (PNLS, La Ronge) serving northern residents. The municipal libraries are the Regina Public Library and the Saskatoon Public Library. The seven regional libraries are:

- Chinook Regional Library – Swift Current,
- Lakeland Library Region – North Battleford,
- Palliser Regional Library – Moose Jaw,
- Parkland Regional Library – Yorkton,
- Southeast Regional Library – Weyburn,
- Wapiti Regional Library – Prince Albert,
- Wheatland Regional Library – Saskatoon.

Current Trends of the Aboriginal Population of Saskatchewan

- Aboriginal birth rate is two-times that of non-Aboriginal peoples.
- Currently, Aboriginal peoples comprise 11.4% of the total Saskatchewan population
- By 2045, the Aboriginal population is expected to increase to 33% of the total Saskatchewan population
- 51% of the Aboriginal population is under the age of 20 compared to 29% of the non-Aboriginal population
- By 2006, 1 in 3 new school entrants throughout Saskatchewan will be Aboriginal
- In the south, 25% of First Nations peoples live on-reserve; in the north, 75% live on-reserve
- 41 per cent of Aboriginal peoples 15 years of age and older have completed (at least) Grade 12, compared to 58 per cent of non-Aboriginal peoples (1996 census)
- The participation of Aboriginal peoples in the provincial economy is well below the provincial average for non-Aboriginal people
- The employment rate for Aboriginal peoples is 38 per cent compared to 65 per cent for Non-Aboriginal peoples (1996 census)
- The average income of the Aboriginal population is significantly lower than that of non-Aboriginal peoples
- Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately represented within Social Services and the correctional system

* For more information on public libraries go to http://www.lib.sk.ca/findalibrary/

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Public Library Services in Saskatchewan

A **library** is defined as any organized collection of printed books and periodicals or of any other graphic, electronic, or audio-visual materials, and the services of a staff to provide and facilitate use of such materials or of other information sources as are required to meet the informational, research, educational, cultural or recreational needs of its users.

A **public library,** as established under *The Public Libraries Act, 1996*, is supported by tax dollars and provides service to the population of a community or region free of charge to the individual. The American Library Association has defined the roles that a public library may play in a community and the most frequently chosen roles by public libraries in Saskatchewan are:

- encouraging young children to develop a lifelong interest in reading;
- providing recreational and popular reading materials;
- providing accurate and reliable information to meet daily living needs;
- supporting formal and informal education for lifelong learning; and
- serving as a community centre.

Also, under *The Public Libraries Act, 1996*, public libraries in Saskatchewan are organized into the **provincial public library system** to ensure universal access across the province and to facilitate the resource sharing which achieves maximum service at least cost.

Currently, there are two municipal libraries and seven regional libraries serving southern Saskatchewan, and the Pahkisimon Nuye·áh Library System (PNLS, La Ronge) serving northern residents. The municipal libraries are the Regina Public Library and the Saskatoon Public Library. The seven regional libraries are:

- Chinook Regional Library – Swift Current,
- Lakeland Library Region – North Battleford,
- Palliser Regional Library – Moose Jaw,
- Parkland Regional Library – Yorkton,
- Southeast Regional Library – Weyburn,
- Wapiti Regional Library – Prince Albert,
- Wheatland Regional Library – Saskatoon.

Current Trends of the Aboriginal Population of Saskatchewan

- Aboriginal birth rate is two-times that of non-Aboriginal peoples.
- Currently, Aboriginal peoples comprise 11.4% of the total Saskatchewan population
- By 2045, the Aboriginal population is expected to increase to 33% of the total Saskatchewan population
- 51% of the Aboriginal population is under the age of 20 compared to 29% of the non-Aboriginal population
- By 2006, 1 in 3 new school entrants throughout Saskatchewan will be Aboriginal
- In the south, 25% of First Nations peoples live on-reserve; in the north, 75% live on-reserve
- 41 per cent of Aboriginal peoples 15 years of age and older have completed (at least) Grade 12, compared to 58 per cent of non-Aboriginal peoples (1996 census)
- The participation of Aboriginal peoples in the provincial economy is well below the provincial average for non-Aboriginal people
- The employment rate for Aboriginal peoples is 38 per cent compared to 65 per cent for Non-Aboriginal peoples (1996 census)
- The average income of the Aboriginal population is significantly lower than that of non-Aboriginal peoples
- Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately represented within Social Services and the correctional system

* For more information on public libraries go to http://www.lib.sk.ca/findalibrary/

+4

Municipal libraries, in addition to serving their urban patrons, act as resource centres for the other libraries in the province. Regional libraries co-ordinate public library services in their area, through branch libraries. Pahkisimon Nuye·áh Library System is a federation of organizations concerned with library services in the north. It co-ordinates services to its member libraries: public, school, college, special and First Nation.

The Public Libraries Act, 1996 also defines the purpose of the provincial public library system:

- to facilitate equitable access to basic library services by all residents of Saskatchewan, and
- to ensure the existence and availability of:
  - the Saskatchewan union catalogue;
  - interlibrary loans;
  - reciprocal borrowing; and
  - autonomous library boards.

All public libraries in Saskatchewan must contribute to the union catalogue, which is the basic tool for resource sharing. Reciprocal borrowing means that all Saskatchewan residents, with a public library card, may borrow from, and return materials to, any public library in the province, without a fee. The interlibrary loan system allows for the lending of materials between and among libraries on behalf of the public. Every local public library must operate under the direction of a local library board. In the case of a rural library, at least one member of the local library board also serves on the regional library board. All five of these conditions must be met for a library to be a public library, under Saskatchewan legislation.

The provincial public library system has traditionally been built on a foundation of local autonomy, co-operation, participation, and support. Municipalities provide the local library facilities and pay an annual grant ("levy") to the regional library system, and the provincial government provides annual grants. Municipalities raise the money to support library services through property taxes. Since the 1980's, municipalities have increased their level of support to regional libraries to 50 percent or more of the regional libraries' revenues. This percent does not include the contribution that municipalities make through the provision of local library facilities. In contrast, provincial grants to the two municipal libraries, Regina and Saskatoon, have represented 3 to 5 percent of total local revenues. In this case, the total revenue includes the provision of facilities.

The ten library system boards are autonomous and are responsible for all policy, financial and library service decisions. The regional library system was established to allow rural libraries to share resources – books, information, etc. – and to enable delivery of library services to a dispersed population in the most cost-effective manner.

For further detail about the structure and services of the public library systems in Saskatchewan, refer to: structure - http://www.lib.sk.ca/staff/minaboriginal/structure.html; .
services - http://www.lib.sk.ca/staff/minaboriginal/services.html.

The Public Libraries Act, 1996, requires Saskatchewan municipalities to participate in the public library system. This is to ensure equitable access to global information, resources and library services for all Saskatchewan residents. First Nations are distinct from municipalities, and constitutionally, cannot be required by the Province of Saskatchewan to participate in the public library system.

Section 66 of the Act permits public library systems to enter into agreements with Aboriginal peoples to participate in the provincial public library system. The requirement that agreements be signed before First Nations individuals get library services free-of-charge is intended to put them on an equal footing with residents of municipalities. In both instances, individuals are eligible for library services because their local government, a First Nation or a municipality, is participating in and financially supporting the public library system.

Through the legislative mandate of the Pahkisimon Nuye·áh Library System, created in 1990, First Nations are automatically served by the northern library system. However, First Nations south of the Northern Administration District must negotiate an agreement with the regional library serving their area. All agreements provide for access to existing library services province-wide, such as reciprocal borrowing and interlibrary loans.

In 2001, 20 of the 57 southern Saskatchewan First Nations had agreements with regional libraries and paid grants ("levies") to receive library services. The services offered under these agreements vary from library system to library system, and from First Nation to First Nation. Services may include:

- Cards that permit access to off-reserve public library services,
- On-reserve public library,
- Paperback deposit,
- Other arrangements such as book drops.

Currently in order for residents of the 37 non-participating First Nations to obtain public library services, individuals are required to pay a fee. Since all municipalities are required to participate in the library system, all other residents in the province have free access to public library services. Although not intended, payment of fees may be perceived as discriminatory, and presents a barrier to library services for on-reserve First Nations.

> *"In addition to having some Aboriginal people disqualified from library services altogether, the usage levels of on-reserve Aboriginal peoples is lower than we would like. Only 21 per cent of the residents of participating [First Nations in the Southeast region] have current public library cards. Of these, only 4 per cent are truly active users of the public library system."* (Southeast Regional Library, *Brief to the Minister's Advisory Committee on Public Library Services for Aboriginal Peoples*)

Aboriginal Education and Special Libraries

The public library system in Saskatchewan is complemented by school, college, university and special libraries. The libraries of three organizations, in particular, deliver library services for First Nations and Métis people in the province. The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) and the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) house libraries primarily serving their respective student bodies. In addition to the two post-secondary institution libraries, the Saskatchewan

The Public Libraries Act, 1996, requires Saskatchewan municipalities to participate in the public library system. This is to ensure equitable access to global information, resources and library services for all Saskatchewan residents. First Nations are distinct from municipalities, and constitutionally, cannot be required by the Province of Saskatchewan to participate in the public library system.

Section 66 of the Act permits public library systems to enter into agreements with Aboriginal peoples to participate in the provincial public library system. The requirement that agreements be signed before First Nations individuals get library services free-of-charge is intended to put them on an equal footing with residents of municipalities. In both instances, individuals are eligible for library services because their local government, a First Nation or a municipality, is participating in and financially supporting the public library system.

Through the legislative mandate of the Pahkisimon Nuye·áh Library System, created in 1990, First Nations are automatically served by the northern library system. However, First Nations south of the Northern Administration District must negotiate an agreement with the regional library serving their area. All agreements provide for access to existing library services province-wide, such as reciprocal borrowing and interlibrary loans.

In 2001, 20 of the 57 southern Saskatchewan First Nations had agreements with regional libraries and paid grants ("levies") to receive library services. The services offered under these agreements vary from library system to library system, and from First Nation to First Nation. Services may include:

- Cards that permit access to off-reserve public library services,
- On-reserve public library,
- Paperback deposit,
- Other arrangements such as book drops.

Currently in order for residents of the 37 non-participating First Nations to obtain public library services, individuals are required to pay a fee. Since all municipalities are required to participate in the library system, all other residents in the province have free access to public library services. Although not intended, payment of fees may be perceived as discriminatory, and presents a barrier to library services for on-reserve First Nations.

> ***"In addition to having some Aboriginal people disqualified from library services altogether, the usage levels of on-reserve Aboriginal peoples is lower than we would like. Only 21 per cent of the residents of participating [First Nations in the Southeast region] have current public library cards. Of these, only 4 per cent are truly active users of the public library system."*** **(Southeast Regional Library, *Brief to the Minister's Advisory Committee on Public Library Services for Aboriginal Peoples*)**

Aboriginal Education and Special Libraries

The public library system in Saskatchewan is complemented by school, college, university and special libraries. The libraries of three organizations, in particular, deliver library services for First Nations and Métis people in the province. The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) and the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) house libraries primarily serving their respective student bodies. In addition to the two post-secondary institution libraries, the Saskatchewan

Indian Cultural Centre (SICC) supports a library for the First Nations and Métis people of Saskatchewan.

All three libraries have extensive collections with a strong First Nations and Métis focus. However, the Gabriel Dumont Institute and Saskatchewan Indian Federated College libraries focus on meeting the specific information needs related to students' academic programs and providing information on First Nations and Métis topics. Members of the public can access the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College's library services for a fee of $25 that is refundable when the patron ceases to use the services. The Gabriel Dumont Institute does not actively promote its services to the public. However, the staff do not deny members of the public access to its resources. The Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre's library services are tailored to serve the public with a variety of materials on First Nations and Métis people.

These special libraries work with the public library system to ensure access to library materials province-wide. For example, all of the libraries (although not all the branches) offer inter-library loan services and their catalogues are accessible on the Internet. For further detail on Aboriginal and Special Libraries please refer to http://www.lib.sk.ca/staff/minaboriginal/speciallib.html.

Public Library Services for First Nations and Métis People Across Canada

Information was compiled on the public library services for First Nations and Métis people in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario. The public library system in New Brunswick was also researched. However, New Brunswick's situation is significantly different than Saskatchewan's, making the public library systems difficult to compare. The focus was therefore on British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario, which have structures similar to those in Saskatchewan.

The inter-jurisdictional comparison identified inequities in library services for First Nations and Métis people in all provinces, and in particular, inequities for on-reserve First Nations people. Ontario and Saskatchewan have made the greatest effort in addressing these inequities. Ontario employs three First Nations library consultants to assist in the establishment of Aboriginal libraries. There are 55 First Nations libraries in Ontario out of approximately 200. Thirty-two out of 74 First Nations participate in Saskatchewan's public library system, and 10 have on-reserve public libraries. There are no on-reserve public libraries in British Columbia and Alberta. One on-reserve public library at Norway House is currently being re-established in Manitoba.

First Nations are able to enter into negotiations for public library services in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario. First Nations in Alberta may apply to form a library board. In Manitoba, there is no provision in *The Public Libraries Act* regarding the establishment of First Nations libraries.

Métis and off-reserve First Nations people receive the same library services as non-Aboriginal people, although they often use libraries less than non-Aboriginal people do. However, there have been few province-wide initiatives to improve library services to Métis and off-reserve First Nations people. Saskatchewan's Library Services for Aboriginal Peoples Committee works to

promote and improve library services both on and off-reserve. For example, the Saskatchewan's Library Services for Aboriginal Peoples Committee held a conference in Saskatoon in November of 1992. Efforts have been made by some public library branches to attract First Nations and Métis patrons and improve public library services for First Nations and Métis people.
The committee was unable to find a truly effective, province-wide model for equitable public library services for First Nations and Métis people. Although a number of interesting and effective initiatives were identified at the local level, nowhere were these initiatives working throughout an entire province.

For summaries of each of the provinces studied and comparison charts refer to, http://www.lib.sk.ca/staff/minaboriginal/interjuris/index.html.

IV. VISION

Universal and equitable access to public library services for all residents of Saskatchewan, including Aboriginal people, both on- and off-reserve.

Universal access means that every resident of Saskatchewan has access to a public library card without payment of a fee. The report of this committee is based on a two-part strategy for improving access to library services for Aboriginal people:

1. To improve access to First Nations individuals residing on-reserve. Section V of the report, on universal access addresses this part of the strategy.
2. To removing barriers and improving access to all Aboriginal people. Sections VI - X of the report address this part of the strategy.

To the committee, equitable access for all Aboriginal people includes:

- Increased participation by First Nations and Métis people in the public library system.
- Aboriginal representation on public library boards in proportion to the local First Nations and Métis population. Elders are invited to participate in the Board's work.
- Public libraries that provide a safe and welcoming environment; are busy, lively and inviting; and encourage First Nations and Métis participation by providing culturally sensitive programs and services.
- Collections that reflect the community, including a variety of materials with Aboriginal content.
- That public libraries serve as repositories of First Nations and Métis cultures and histories.
- Personalized service that focuses on providing quality information, resources, and services, uses new technologies, and engages the community, through outreach and promotion.
- A culturally diverse and representative workforce with First Nations and Métis people represented at all levels of the public library system.
- Library training for First Nations and Métis people, with the library profession is promoted as a career option. Library technician training is delivered throughout the province.
- A web site by, for, and about First Nations and Métis people and libraries, that serves as a clearinghouse for information on Aboriginal materials, and as a network to facilitate initiatives such as training and employment opportunities.
- Improved relations between the First Nations governments, the Province of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada, resulting in increased financial support to improve public library services for all and development of on-reserve public library services based on community needs.
- First Nations public libraries that are part of the provincial public library system and that participates in the Saskatchewan union catalogue, the province-wide interlibrary loan network, and reciprocal borrowing.

"I would like to see Aboriginal parents and children using the public library as a natural and comfortable part of their of lives" (Allan Johnson, Southeast Regional Library).

V. UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES

Universal access to public libraries is defined in this report as the opportunity for every resident of Saskatchewan, including individuals residing on First Nations reserve land, to receive a public library card anywhere in Saskatchewan, without payment of a fee.

Establishing Universal Access

Recommendation:

1. That every resident of Saskatchewan, including all individuals who reside on First Nations reserve land, have access to the full range of existing public library services.

> "*Information is for everyone!*" (Brenda Roberts, Peter Ballantyne First Nation).
>
> "*Everyone should have access to a public library*" (Bob Gerow, Director of Education, Agency Chiefs Tribal Council).
>
> "*The most unpleasant part of our work is telling someone his library card has been cancelled or that he cannot borrow any of our materials... We feel for the mother who brings in her Kindergarten child, determined to give [him or her] a good start. It hurts when you see body language, which shows the person feels second-rate. Often our staff are accused of being racist.*" (Annmarie Hillson, North Battleford Librarian, *Brief to the Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People*)

Provincial Library's mission is to "strengthen libraries to ensure equitable access to global information, resources and library services for all Saskatchewan residents." In order to achieve universal access to public library services, the committee recommends that every resident of the province be eligible to obtain a public library card without payment of a fee.

Due to the need for First Nations to negotiate agreements for public library services, potential First Nations and Métis library patrons are asked to pay a fee for a library card if they reside within the boundaries of a non-participating First Nation. Whether or not this results in an inability to obtain a library card, the circumstances can be misinterpreted as racism, and pose a significant barrier for individual members of First Nations, to access public library services.

In the public consultations, both the library community and the public were concerned about the perception of discrimination resulting from the inability of residents of non-participating First Nations to obtain a public library card. Library staff expressed concern in having to turn away potential patrons who are residents of a non-participating First Nation. The Minister's Advisory Committee believes that the full range of library materials and services should be made available to everyone in Saskatchewan, regardless of residency.

V. UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES

Universal access to public libraries is defined in this report as the opportunity for every resident of Saskatchewan, including individuals residing on First Nations reserve land, to receive a public library card anywhere in Saskatchewan, without payment of a fee.

Establishing Universal Access

Recommendation:

1. That every resident of Saskatchewan, including all individuals who reside on First Nations reserve land, have access to the full range of existing public library services.

> "*Information is for everyone!*" (Brenda Roberts, Peter Ballantyne First Nation).
>
> "*Everyone should have access to a public library*" (Bob Gerow, Director of Education, Agency Chiefs Tribal Council).
>
> "*The most unpleasant part of our work is telling someone his library card has been cancelled or that he cannot borrow any of our materials... We feel for the mother who brings in her Kindergarten child, determined to give [him or her] a good start. It hurts when you see body language, which shows the person feels second-rate. Often our staff are accused of being racist.*" (Annmarie Hillson, North Battleford Librarian, *Brief to the Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People*)

Provincial Library's mission is to "strengthen libraries to ensure equitable access to global information, resources and library services for all Saskatchewan residents." In order to achieve universal access to public library services, the committee recommends that every resident of the province be eligible to obtain a public library card without payment of a fee.

Due to the need for First Nations to negotiate agreements for public library services, potential First Nations and Métis library patrons are asked to pay a fee for a library card if they reside within the boundaries of a non-participating First Nation. Whether or not this results in an inability to obtain a library card, the circumstances can be misinterpreted as racism, and pose a significant barrier for individual members of First Nations, to access public library services.

In the public consultations, both the library community and the public were concerned about the perception of discrimination resulting from the inability of residents of non-participating First Nations to obtain a public library card. Library staff expressed concern in having to turn away potential patrons who are residents of a non-participating First Nation. The Minister's Advisory Committee believes that the full range of library materials and services should be made available to everyone in Saskatchewan, regardless of residency.

Funding Universal Access

Recommendations:

2. **That the regional library funding formula be changed to include the population for on-reserve residents of First Nations within a regional library's service area.**

3. **That the provincial grant pool for regional libraries be increased so that no regional library is adversely affected by the population changes resulting from the inclusion of all First Nations people.**

4. **That the Government of Saskatchewan work with the Government of Canada to fund universal access to public library services for First Nations people.**

Provincial grants recognize the philosophy of combined responsibility for public library services at the provincial and local levels. The province provides grants to public libraries to support resource sharing among libraries rather than to fund local service. Municipalities must participate in the provincial public library system and municipal library grants ("levies") are the major funding source for local library services. Amounts of these library grants are determined by autonomous library boards, usually on the basis of population size and level of service in the community. Municipalities with larger populations and more extensive library services normally pay greater grants than municipalities with smaller populations or with no service point.

The Minister's Advisory Committee recommends that this principle of shared responsibility be maintained in funding library services for First Nations people living on reserve. First Nations cannot be required to participate in the public library system. However, the Committee recommends that First Nations retain responsibility for developing and funding local, on-reserve, library service and the Province of Saskatchewan provide their share of the grants related to First Nations populations. This would ensure that First Nations individuals receive library service without payment of a fee the same as residents of municipalities. Decisions regarding local service development can be made at the local level.. The committee recommends that First Nations and public library systems continue to negotiate agreements for further public library services, including the establishment and maintenance of on-reserve public library service points.

Provincial grants are calculated using a base grant with a population adjustment. The regional grant pool formula was fixed in *The Public Libraries Regulations, 1996*. First Nations populations that were participating at that time were included in the pool; however, there is currently no mechanism to increase the pool to cover additional First Nations populations.

All First Nations in the Northern Administration District are included in the Pahkisimon Nuye·áh Library System. Under the legislation, the northern library system office is primarily funded by provincial grants. Funding for local public libraries comes from First Nations and local municipalities, which are eligible for a matching provincial grant, to a maximum of $15,000.

The Advisory Committee heard that First Nations councils need to provide many services for their members with limited budgets. The current structure of the regional grant pool limits access to funds for First Nations library service. A need for more funding for First Nations library service was articulated by the First Nations, Métis and library communities.

Regional libraries wish to provide public library services to First Nations, but they need an increase in the grant pool to accommodate the First Nations populations. Without an increase, services to First Nations within a particular region would occur at the expense of other regions.

During consultations, the Advisory Committee was also informed that provincial funding for Aboriginal library service is appropriate because the Province of Saskatchewan receives funding as a result of First Nations people through a variety of sources: equalization payments, provincial sales tax, federal grants for urban schools, etc. These are not matters for the Advisory Committee to address. Rather, they need to be resolved between the federal and provincial governments and First Nations at the Fiscal Relations Table.

The Mechanics of Universal Access

Recommendations:

5. **That all Saskatchewan residents be able to obtain public library cards at any public library service point in the province and that libraries explore the technology available to provide that functional capability.**

6. **That the public library community of Saskatchewan work toward a standardized, province-wide, proof-of-residence for the purpose of obtaining library cards.**

The Advisory Committee heard that some members of the public, particularly students attending post-secondary institutions in urban locations, had experienced difficulties obtaining a public library card because of problems in providing proof of residency in the library's service area. Residents of both participating and non-participating First Nations expressed difficulty in providing proof of residency to obtain a library card. The Advisory Committee recommends that initiatives be taken to standardize proof of residency as it is problematic in providing universal access. A possible solution for students would be for libraries to ask for the address of the students' permanent residence, as well as their address while attending the post-secondary institution.

To make library cards available for all residents of Saskatchewan at all public library service points throughout the province, technology is needed to provide public libraries with the information they require to issue library cards to individuals residing outside their service area. The result of such a network could be the creation of a Saskatchewan public library card that could be used in all libraries throughout the province. A Saskatchewan public library card would be analogous to a Saskatchewan Health Card that allows the holder access to health care anywhere in the province. However, the Committee is not recommending the use of Saskatchewan Health Cards as proof of identity.

VI. ON-RESERVE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE POINTS AND AGREEMENTS

Recommendations:

7. **That First Nations have ownership of, and primary responsibility for, on-reserve public libraries and public library services, such as:**
   - **Stand-alone public libraries,**
   - **School-housed public libraries,**
   - **Bookmobiles or portable libraries,**
   - **Book exchanges, or**
   - **Computer access to library services with van delivery for books.**

8. **That partnerships be explored as a way to achieve First Nations bookmobile services.**

9. **That First Nations and public library systems be encouraged to negotiate agreements for further development of public library services, including on-reserve libraries.**

10. **That public library systems offer technical and developmental support to First Nations libraries, and ensure they are connected to the province-wide public library system.**

11. **That public library legislation and regulations provide sufficient flexibility to allow library systems to enter into an agreement with a First Nation with reserve land within the boundaries of two or more public library systems.**

> "*First Nations peoples need to take charge of libraries as they have with on-reserve schools*" (Larry Goldade, Director of Education, Prince Albert Grand Council).
>
> "*Libraries may not be a priority, but they are most definitely a need*" (Valerie Laliberte, Committee Member).

Universal access will allow all residents of Saskatchewan, including residents of First Nations to access existing public library services. In addition, First Nations and public library systems must be encouraged to negotiate further agreements for on-reserve services. This may include the establishment of on-reserve public library service points, which the Advisory Committee heard was desired by some First Nations, as a way to promote First Nation responsibility for and primary control of the public library services for their communities. It will also be important to consider ways for First Nations to cooperate to establish and provide library services.

However, there were a number of barriers identified, which hinder the establishment of on-reserve service points. First, libraries are often not seen as a priority, when First Nations Chief and Councils budget for such urgent needs as housing, infrastructure, education, etc. Secondly, there is often no suitable infrastructure to support the creation of public libraries on reserves. Many of the First Nations have school libraries but are not equipped to establish a public library. Third, First Nations lack experience in how to establish and operate a public library or combined school-public library. More practical matters in administering public library services were of concern for many of the First Nations participants, such as a need for trained library staff and a limited budget from which to operate.

Some of the First Nations and Métis participants believed their current library services suffice to serve their students. Others identified negative experiences with the pubic library services that they and their First Nation had received to date. Transportation to get to an off-reserve library was also identified as a barrier for some individuals.

Where First Nations and Métis participants agreed that on-reserve public library services should be established, the Advisory Committee heard a number of options for on-reserve library service points:

- Stand-alone public libraries,
- School-housed public libraries,
- Bookmobiles or portable libraries,
- Book drops,
- Computers and van delivery to facilitate book exchanges.

Regional libraries have ceased bookmobile operations due to high financial costs. However, the Advisory Committee heard that bookmobiles were a preferred method for delivery of on-reserve public library services in some parts of the province. It was suggested that the cooperation of a number of First Nations, sharing the costs of a bookmobile, might allow for the re-establishment of the service for on-reserve residents.

Given these concerns, it is important that the First Nations be given guidance so they can determine if they would desire a public library service point on reserve, and if so, the form it would take. First Nations may not require standard public library services. The committee recommends that options be explored to determine what innovative services, beyond standard public library services, could be provided to meet the needs and financial capabilities of the community.

The Advisory Committee recognizes that there may also be a role for the public library system in supporting First Nations libraries that are not public libraries. For example, the Southeast Regional Library has assisted the Pasqua First Nation, which is in the Southeast Regional Library's boundaries, in launching an "Elder's Library". The Elder's Library is not a public library service point and therefore does not participate in public library services such as interlibrary loans. Rather, the library houses materials to be loaned to the Elders of the Pasqua First Nation.

Upon receiving advice on the types of public library service available as well the cost projections and administration of each, the First Nations would be better prepared to determine what type of library service is best suited to their particular needs and financial situation.

To facilitate the development of on-reserve public library service points, regional libraries are encouraged to enter into agreements with First Nations. Currently, First Nations with reserve land located across two or more regional library boundaries, or located in a regional library and the northern administration district, are required to negotiate services from all public library systems involved. This process has been criticized as inefficient and frustrating, not only for the First Nation but also for the public library systems involved. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends that legislation be flexible enough to enable a First Nation in such a situation to enter into an agreement with a single library or system, that applies to all that particular First Nation's reserve lands.

VII. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND FUNDING

Recommendations:

12. That the Provincial Library explore partnerships with Aboriginal governments to facilitate the development of public library services for First Nations and Métis people.

13. That funding for developing on-reserve public library services for First Nations be provided by the Government of Canada with assistance from First Nations governments.

14. That the Government of Saskatchewan make special project funds available to the public library community in Saskatchewan, and that these funds be designated for public library service initiatives addressing matters of interest and concern to First Nations and Métis communities.

The issue of jurisdiction often arose during the public consultations. First Nations and Métis participants voiced concern over limited provincial involvement because First Nations and Métis people are federal jurisdiction. As such, programming and services are to be provided by federal departments or federally sponsored agencies, rather than the provincial government.

The basis of their concerns is rooted in their historical treaty relationships with the British Crown and eventually the Government of Canada. It was suggested that public library services might be a component of the education provision as secured under the Numbered Treaties. If public libraries were considered a treaty right, this could imply federal responsibility and may provide a venue from which to secure funding to establish and/or improve public library services for First Nations and Métis people.

During consultations the committee heard that provincial funding for Aboriginal library services should be investigated because the Province of Saskatchewan receives financial transfers as a result of First Nations and Métis people through various sources such as equalization payments, provincial sales tax and federal grants for urban schools. However, these are matters that may need to be resolved between the federal and provincial governments and First Nations at the Fiscal Relations Table.

The Advisory Committee suggests that special project funding be available to improve public library services for First Nations and Métis people. Initiatives could include: the hiring of Aboriginal public library coordinators by public library systems; pilot projects; library programming on Aboriginal themes and issues; and Aboriginal cultural awareness training for the public library community.

VIII. PUBLIC LIBRARY RELATIONSHIPS WITH FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS PEOPLE

Enhancing Public Library Relationships with First Nations and Métis People

Recommendations:

15. That barriers to the use of public libraries by Aboriginal people be identified and processes be put in place to systematically eliminate those barriers.

16. That public libraries work with the First Nations and Métis communities to evaluate the extent to which the libraries are welcoming, and that processes be put in place to encourage the libraries to provide a culturally appropriate and sensitive atmosphere.

17. That all public library systems provide Aboriginal cultural awareness and sensitivity training, and encourage their staff and board members to participate.

> Public libraries should "*train all staff to provide the best service possible to every patron, and to treat all patrons, including Aboriginal [and] Métis peoples, equally and fairly.*" (John M. Cuelenaere Public Library, Prince Albert, *Brief on Library Services for Aboriginal People*)

A common perception among First Nations and Métis people is that racism is a problem in the public libraries. Often service delivery that is not culturally responsive contributes to the lack of First Nations and Métis patronage. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends that initiatives be taken to ensure staff attitudes are culturally responsive and appropriate toward First Nations and Métis patrons, and to help First Nations and Métis people feel comfortable in accessing public library services.

Furthermore, the concept of public library service is a relatively new idea to First Nations and Métis people. Their cultures and histories traditionally have been passed on orally, rather than through the written word. As such, the benefits of libraries are sometimes not well understood by First Nations and Métis people, and libraries have not been strongly promoted within their communities. Therefore, libraries may seem strange and unwelcoming to First Nations and Métis patrons.

Because First Nations and Métis patrons sometimes perceive staff attitudes towards them as negative, the committee recommends that cultural awareness and sensitivity training be taken by library staff and library board members. The Advisory Committee advises that training be on-going. A person of First Nations and Métis descent must facilitate aboriginal cultural awareness and sensitivity training. The committee recommends that public libraries approach a variety of organizations offering such training, to ensure the best training program for their specific needs.

To further cultural awareness, the committee recommends that library staff and board members be encouraged to participate in local community groups related to First Nations and Métis people.

The First Nations and Métis representatives at the public consultations were concerned with the unwelcoming atmosphere at many public libraries. To make the public library environment as welcoming as possible, several suggestions were made:

- Greeting patrons in the local Aboriginal language;
- Displaying signage in the local Aboriginal language;
- Displaying exhibits of Aboriginal art;
- Presenting displays of Aboriginal authors and Aboriginal materials;
- Locating paperback racks near the entrance;
- Playing music in the library (e.g. pow wow music);
- Having suggestion boxes, and taking comments and suggestions seriously;
- Opening during the evening for adult patrons (particularly in school-housed public libraries);
- Extending invitations to local schools with First Nations and Métis students;
- Extending invitations to the First Nations and Métis adult populations through their groups and organizations (e.g. Friendship Centres);
- Developing and providing culturally appropriate programming for First Nations and Métis patrons; and
- Programming to increase awareness of the histories and cultures of First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan.

It is a widely held perception within the First Nations and Métis communities and the public library community that libraries delivering more culturally appropriate and culturally sensitive services offer a more welcoming environment and will ultimately result in an increase in First Nations and Métis participation.

Promotion and Preservation of Aboriginal Languages, Cultures and Histories

Recommendations:

18. That public libraries support First Nations and Métis communities in the preservation of their oral traditions, Aboriginal languages, cultures and histories by establishing partnerships with First Nations and Métis groups and organizations to develop and offer culturally appropriate programming.

19. That public libraries develop collections that include Aboriginal content such as: materials written in Aboriginal languages and syllabics, the recordings Aboriginal histories and the stories told by the Elders, with their permission.

20. That public libraries engage First Nation and Métis Elders to participate in library programming.

21. That all public libraries, including those serving communities with few or no First Nations and Métis people, expose the general public to the histories, issues and concerns of First Nation and Métis people, through collection development and programming.

22. That partnerships be formed between public libraries and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner in recognition of its role in public education about First Nations.

> "*Elders are the libraries of the community*" (Ralph Paul, Director of Education, Meadow Lake Tribal Council).

First Nations and Métis people throughout the province expressed concern over the preservation of their languages and their cultures. The Advisory Committee makes the above recommendations in recognition of the role public libraries can play a role in promoting and preserving Aboriginal languages, cultures and histories. Although the promotion and protection of Aboriginal languages, cultures and histories are particularly important in libraries serving large First Nations and Métis communities, they are also useful to libraries serving communities with few or no First Nations and Métis members.

The development of quality Aboriginal collections, and collections written in Aboriginal languages will assist in the preservation of Aboriginal languages and cultures. The development of such collections would provide valuable information to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples alike. Many First Nations and Métis Elders read syllabics, and therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends that public libraries be encouraged to develop collections written in syllabics if there is a need in the community or communities they serve.

Signage and greetings in the local Aboriginal language will promote language preservation as well as work to provide a welcoming atmosphere. A "Word of the Week" in the local Aboriginal language is an innovative and fun method to promote language and culture within the library.

Public libraries can play a role in preserving Aboriginal languages, cultures and histories by offering specialized programming. Public libraries are encouraged to establish partnerships with First Nations and Métis groups and organizations to develop culturally appropriate programming. It would be beneficial to include Elders in the development of such programming.

At the public consultations, members of the First Nations and Métis communities as well as the Advisory Committee members of First Nations and Métis descent, stressed the importance of oral tradition within First Nations and Métis cultures. Public libraries can help promote and preserve this tradition by inviting Elders to the library to participate in library programming. In particular, Elders can be invited to tell stories and histories. The committee also recommends that libraries promote storytelling in Aboriginal languages, because, as a participant from a First Nations community stated during the public consultation in Beauval, stories lose some of their meaning when they are translated into English.

Furthermore, the Advisory Committee recommends that First Nations and Métis communities be encouraged to preserve the stories and histories of the Elders of First Nations and Métis communities. Public libraries may act in a facilitating role, by offering a venue to record Elders' stories. However, libraries need to be sensitive to the concept of copyright in the First Nations and Métis communities. Anyone recording stories, in any format, must seek and secure permission from the storyteller prior to recording.

It is important that public libraries present themselves as venues for the promotion and preservation of Aboriginal languages, cultures and histories. Appropriate collection and program development are important ways for libraries to demonstrate this ability.

IX. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

First Nations and Métis Involvement in the Public Library Workforce and in Governance

Recommendations:

23. That public libraries encourage employment strategies that promote Aboriginal participation at all levels within the public library workforce.

24. That the value of First Nations and Métis board members be promoted through provincial initiatives in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association and the Provincial Library.

25. That there be Aboriginal representation on local public library boards proportionate to the local Aboriginal population.

26. That public library boards consider including a local Elder in an ex-officio position.

27. That union agreements and public library policies be reviewed and revised to include provisions to develop a representative and diverse workforce.

During the public consultations, the Advisory Committee heard an expressed need for more trained Aboriginal staff in both the public library and First Nations and Métis communities. One participant described his discomfort upon entering the public library because he was the only person of First Nations descent in the library. Having Aboriginal staff present in the libraries would encourage First Nations and Métis people to visit libraries and access library services to their fullest. However, the Advisory Committee recommends that the public library workplace be prepared for an influx of Aboriginal employees. A possible approach to preparing the public library workforce may include participating in the Aboriginal Employment Development Program offered by the Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs Department.

The committee recommends that First Nations and Métis staff members be present in all levels of the public library system, including the public library boards. Increasing the participation of Aboriginal staff members at all levels within the public library workforce and on public library boards would support the Advisory Committee's vision of more culturally sensitive library services.

To facilitate the recommended expansion of Aboriginal representation within the public library workforce it is suggested that the library systems consult with First Nations and Métis organizations in their areas to recruit Aboriginal employees. To obtain referrals for qualified First Nations and Métis people, libraries may also seek advice from the Aboriginal Library Consultants as discussed in section X, subsection A of this report. Several innovative suggestions were presented to the Advisory Committee including:

- In areas where the population warrants, encourage hiring practices that give preference to persons who have local language skills, e.g. "Knowledge of the Cree Language would be an asset" to appear in the posting;
- Invite each regional library to designate a staff or board member to work with the Aboriginal Consultant, as outlined in section X, subsection A of this report, to implement the Advisory Committee's proposals;
- Invite each regional library to designate a staff or board member to be responsible for outreach and liaison with the First Nations and Métis communities in their area;
- Have public library staff, and librarians in particular, attend career days and/or conferences to promote library work and to recruit First Nations and Métis people to the public library workforce and public library boards;
- Hire First Nations and Métis summer students to increase Aboriginal representation and as a method of recruiting future employees of Aboriginal descent;
- During interviews, ask potential employees how they would improve public library services to First Nations and Métis people and how their ideas might be implemented; and
- Compile a comprehensive list of all positions within the public library system and have it posted on the Saskatchewan Libraries Web Site, with a link on the Aboriginal component of the web site (see section X, subsection C); the list may include a description of the duties and education level required.

In areas where the population warrants, the committee recommends that public library boards recruit Aboriginal members. Consultation with First Nations and Métis groups for potential board members would be a positive method of recruitment. As well, the Advisory Committee recommends that provincial initiatives be undertaken to promote the benefits of having First Nations and Métis public library board members.

As discussed earlier in this report, the comfort level of First Nations and Métis patrons in the public libraries requires improvement. Members of the Advisory Committee agree that increasing the number of Aboriginal employees in the public library workforce would promote a welcoming environment for First Nations and Métis patrons. Furthermore, the inclusion of First Nations and Métis people on public library staffs and boards would result in the delivery of culturally relevant and culturally sensitive programs and services, thereby increasing the number of First Nations and Métis patrons at the public libraries. The importance of Elders in First Nations and Métis communities would be reflected with an ex-officio position for an Elder on public library boards, thereby acknowledging their roles as traditional educators and sources of history and knowledge.

Training for First Nations and Métis People and Staff

Recommendations:

28. That public libraries work in conjunction with First Nations and Métis communities and post-secondary education institutions to create a library training program to meet the needs of First Nations and Métis students.

29. **That a library technician program be offered in Saskatchewan, through various methods of distance education, and that courses offered be transferable to universities and technical colleges.**

30. **That public libraries work with the Saskatchewan Library Association to explore partnership opportunities to develop scholarships and bursaries for First Nations and Métis students to complete library training.**

31. **That public libraries explore partnership opportunities for joint conferences as forums for discussion on library services for First Nations and Métis people, and as training opportunities for Aboriginal public library staff.**

32. **That public libraries establish an internship program for First Nations and Métis students who are graduates of library technician and library science programs.**

33. **That public libraries establish a mentoring program to assist First Nations and Métis public librarians, and to promote cooperation between First Nations and Métis communities and the public library community.**

Lack of available training programs for First Nations and Métis library staff was presented as an important issue. A library technician program, offered through distance education, was seen as a need of First Nations and Métis library staff. It is difficult for many to leave their responsibilities at home to attend the Library and Information Technology program, presently only offered at the SIAST Saskatoon (Kelsey) campus. If library staff do leave their communities to obtain further library training, there is often no one to replace them in their libraries and fulfill their duties.

The Advisory Committee invited representatives from the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT) to speak to them about the establishment of a library technician program for First Nations and Métis library staff. Both SIAST and SIIT expressed interest in partnering to deliver library technician training, with a distance education option, particularly designed for First Nation and Métis people. Methods of distance education could include: correspondence courses, two-way video conferencing, or direct delivery of the library training by an instructor in the community. As well, public libraries could provide assistance, support, and mentoring for public library staff taking the courses through distance education.

The committee would like to see an entire library training program offered through distance education. However, if not all required courses are offered, those that are, must be completely transferable to a university or technical college, allowing students to pursue completion of library training elsewhere, if desired.

The Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) is exploring the possibility of creating an undergraduate degree program in Library Science. This program could be offered through the Indian Studies or the Indian Education programs, and/or the Northern Campus Interdisciplinary Certificate Program.

To provide the financial opportunities for First Nations and Métis library staff wishing to obtain further library education, it is a recommendation of the committee that public libraries work to establish scholarships and bursaries, through the development of partnerships. The Committee also recommends that these scholarships be designated for individuals of First Nations and Métis descent working towards obtaining Library Technician diplomas, and Master's Degrees in Library Science (MLS) or Library and Information Science (MLIS). Potential partners could include First Nations and Métis organizations, post-secondary institutions, and private corporations.

The committee recommends that public libraries explore possibilities of joint conferences on library services for First Nations and Métis people. Such conferences could provide training opportunities for First Nations and Métis library staff. Potential partners could include:

- Saskatchewan Library Association,
- Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association,
- Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples Committee,
- Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation,
- AWASIS* – a special subject council of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, whose goal is the continued growth and improvement of education for Aboriginal peoples,
- Saskatchewan Tribal Councils' conferences for their teachers,
- Saskatchewan School Library Association,
- Saskatchewan Reading Council,
- Northern Lights School Division, etc.

The Advisory Committee recommends that an internship program be established for First Nations and Métis students and graduates of library technician and library science programs. The Advisory Committee heard concerns about the difficulties that First Nations and Métis library staff face in obtaining higher level positions within libraries. The establishment of a First Nations and Métis library internship program would be a positive solution to this difficulty.

* Awasis is the Cree word for child.

The Advisory Committee looked at the Aboriginal Public Service Internship Program, operated by the Government of Saskatchewan, which may serve as a model for the development of a parallel program within public libraries. The program is designed to provide First Nations and Métis university graduates the opportunity to obtain professional training and management experience within the public service. It is a two-year program, during which the interns rotate through four different job assignments, allowing them to gain an understanding of the decision-making processes within the public service. For additional information see the Public Service Commission web site at http://www.gov.sk.ca/psc/intern/default.htm.

A parallel program for public libraries would provide the opportunity for First Nations and Métis participants to be exposed to a variety of different positions within the public library system, including higher level management positions. As well, First Nations and Métis interns would be allowed the opportunity to work in a variety of public library settings, including:

- Provincial Library,
- one of the two municipal libraries,
- regional library headquarters and branches, and
- PNLS headquarters and member libraries.

The program could be organized by public library directors and Provincial Library in cooperation with the First Nations and Métis communities.

In addition to an internship program, the Advisory Committee considered the establishment of a mentoring program for First Nations and Métis public librarians and library staff. Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM) was invited to present their mentoring program to the Advisory Committee.

The public libraries could use this program as a model for a mentoring project designed to assist First Nations and Métis librarians, and promote cooperation between the public libraries in the Province of Saskatchewan. This program could be co-ordinated by public library director and Provincial Library, in cooperation with the First Nations and Métis communities.

Mentoring Programs:

- *Career Development*: Mentoring can help employees clarify their individual career goals and provide management with valuable insight into their preference and plans.
- *Succession Planning*: According to surveys, a large percentage of the work force will retire with the coming decades... Mentoring is an excellent way to preserve knowledge and pass it on to a new generation of ... employees.
- *Skills Development*: Many employees may not recognize their own potential. Mentoring can help them discover their own interests and strengths, making them more productive contributors to the [work force]...
- *Support of Training Efforts*: ... Mentoring can reinforce training. There is nothing like individualized, one-on-one coaching to help an employee learn, practice, and master new skills.
- *Performance Improvement*: ... All employees can benefit from mentoring. In many cases, all people need to become more productive is the advice and guidance of a positive role model.
- *Upper Management Appraisal*: A new style of mentoring, reverse mentoring, has even been adapted to enable employees to offer feedback to supervisors and senior management on their performance and ways it can be improved. By seeing how they are perceived by others, upper management can learn to be more effective.

Taken from materials prepared for the SERM Mentoring Steering Committee by Nancy Gross.
Based on materials by Lynn Learning Labs, Mentoring: Passing the Torch (1988).

The Advisory Committee looked at the Aboriginal Public Service Internship Program, operated by the Government of Saskatchewan, which may serve as a model for the development of a parallel program within public libraries. The program is designed to provide First Nations and Métis university graduates the opportunity to obtain professional training and management experience within the public service. It is a two-year program, during which the interns rotate through four different job assignments, allowing them to gain an understanding of the decision-making processes within the public service. For additional information see the Public Service Commission web site at http://www.gov.sk.ca/psc/intern/default.htm.

A parallel program for public libraries would provide the opportunity for First Nations and Métis participants to be exposed to a variety of different positions within the public library system, including higher level management positions. As well, First Nations and Métis interns would be allowed the opportunity to work in a variety of public library settings, including:

- Provincial Library,
- one of the two municipal libraries,
- regional library headquarters and branches, and
- PNLS headquarters and member libraries.

The program could be organized by public library directors and Provincial Library in cooperation with the First Nations and Métis communities.

In addition to an internship program, the Advisory Committee considered the establishment of a mentoring program for First Nations and Métis public librarians and library staff. Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM) was invited to present their mentoring program to the Advisory Committee.

The public libraries could use this program as a model for a mentoring project designed to assist First Nations and Métis librarians, and promote cooperation between the public libraries in the Province of Saskatchewan. This program could be co-ordinated by public library director and Provincial Library, in cooperation with the First Nations and Métis communities.

Mentoring Programs:

- *Career Development*: Mentoring can help employees clarify their individual career goals and provide management with valuable insight into their preference and plans.
- *Succession Planning*: According to surveys, a large percentage of the work force will retire with the coming decades... Mentoring is an excellent way to preserve knowledge and pass it on to a new generation of ... employees.
- *Skills Development*: Many employees may not recognize their own potential. Mentoring can help them discover their own interests and strengths, making them more productive contributors to the [work force]...
- *Support of Training Efforts*: ... Mentoring can reinforce training. There is nothing like individualized, one-on-one coaching to help an employee learn, practice, and master new skills.
- *Performance Improvement*: ... All employees can benefit from mentoring. In many cases, all people need to become more productive is the advice and guidance of a positive role model.
- *Upper Management Appraisal*: A new style of mentoring, reverse mentoring, has even been adapted to enable employees to offer feedback to supervisors and senior management on their performance and ways it can be improved. By seeing how they are perceived by others, upper management can learn to be more effective.

Taken from materials prepared for the SERM Mentoring Steering Committee by Nancy Gross.
Based on materials by Lynn Learning Labs, Mentoring: Passing the Torch (1988).

Training for Public Library Staff

Recommendation:

34. That provincial initiatives be undertaken in conjunction with First Nations Chiefs, First Nations Councils, Métis Locals and Elders to offer workshops and training sessions for library staff members on providing services and outreach to First Nations and Métis people.

The Advisory Committee recommends that First Nations Chiefs, Councils, Métis Locals and Elders be involved in the establishment, development and provision of workshops and training sessions for library staff members on providing services and outreach to First Nations and Métis people. The Aboriginal Library Consultants at Provincial Library could co-ordinate such initiatives.

X. DEVELOPMENT OF FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Aboriginal Library Consultants

Recommendations:

35. That Provincial Library establish full-time, permanent positions, designated for individuals of Aboriginal ancestry, for two Aboriginal Library Consultants, to act as central coordinators.

36. That Lakeland, Parkland, Southeast, and Wapiti regional libraries, Pahkisimon Nuye?áh Library System, Regina Public Library and Saskatoon Public Library each establish and maintain a full-time, permanent Aboriginal Library Consultant position, designated for an individual of Aboriginal ancestry, who would act as an implementation coordinator.

> *"Effective library service to Aboriginal people requires ongoing communication between this community and the libraries that serve them. Provincially funded library consultants, who are Aboriginal, could regularly meet with Public Library Directors in the province, and share and discuss concerns and ideas. They would liase with Aboriginal groups and agencies in the province to establish communications and resource networks between libraries and Aboriginal people."* (Saskatoon Public Library, *Presentation to the Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People*)

The model for the Aboriginal Library Consultant positions was developed from the First Nation Consultants in the Ontario Library Service. There are currently three First Nations Consultants: two working through Ontario Library Service North and one working through the Southern Ontario Library Service. The three consultants assist First Nations libraries with a variety of services including: library development, layout, design, training, guidance for collection development, shelving and cataloging, grant applications and an annual library survey.

The positions of Aboriginal Library Consultant and the implementation coordinators would be designated for individuals of First Nations or Métis descent. The Aboriginal Library Consultants would be responsible for a variety of tasks including:

- Working with public libraries serving First Nations and Métis communities;
- Working with First Nation libraries;
- Promoting the importance of public libraries for First Nations and Métis people;
- Coordinating the development of a list of quality Aboriginal library materials and the development of a list of materials no longer suitable for library collections;
- Coordinating recruitment and entry of First Nations and Métis people into the public library workforce;

- Coordinating the preparation of the public library environment for increased First Nations and Métis participation at the staff and trustee levels;
- Coordinating the development of an Aboriginal component to the Saskatchewan Libraries Web Site;
- Directing Aboriginal cultural and sensitivity training;
- Developing training programs and conferences for First Nations and Métis library staff;
- Creating a brochure and province-wide media campaign for the promotion of Aboriginal libraries (e.g. Aboriginal Library Week),
- Asking advice from the Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples Committee.
- Working with the Aboriginal Employment Development Program to increase the number of First Nations and Métis people employed within the Saskatchewan public library workforce.

The consultants would be assisted in implementing these tasks by the coordinators at the local and regional levels. They would work directly with libraries serving First Nations and Métis people, providing assistance in such areas as:

- On-site training,
- Collection development,
- Program development,
- Grant applications,
- Library layout.

It is recommended that a special grant be established to fund the coordinators responsible at local or regional levels. In *The Public Libraries Regulations, 1996*, under "Government Grants", it states:

> Notwithstanding any other grant made by the minister pursuant to these regulations, the minister may make grants to public libraries or public library systems for special projects for the purpose of: (a) assisting in the establishment of any public library; (b) or contributing towards the maintenance of any public library (*The Public Libraries Regulations, 1996* S.R., 1996, c. P-39.2, s. 21.9).

Such positions would assist in the establishment and maintenance of First Nations and Métis public libraries.

The Advisory Committee recognizes that a regional library serving a small First Nations and Métis populations may not require the services of a full time Aboriginal consultant. In these instances it is recommended that the region employ an Aboriginal consultant whose duties may include responsibilities other than those designated to an Aboriginal consultant. These positions would help promote equitable access to public library services throughout the province, consistent with Provincial Library's objectives.

Collections

Recommendations:

37. **That on-reserve public library service points house collections of a quality and size similar to that of a regional branch library serving a comparable population.**

38. **That the public, regional, and northern libraries develop collections of Aboriginal materials reflecting the histories and cultures of the First Nations and Métis people of Saskatchewan, with particular emphasis on the First Nations and Métis people in that area.**

39. **That Aboriginal materials be available in every branch library in Saskatchewan and that rotating blocks be one of the mechanisms used to achieve this goal.**

40. **That Provincial Library and the Aboriginal Library Consultants compile a list of Aboriginal materials recommended and materials not recommended for public libraries, for posting on the Saskatchewan Libraries Web Site.**

> "*... lack of participation in the system by [First Nations] handicaps our ability as information providers to develop collections of merit to meet the needs of our own Aboriginal patrons. Without their input, we do not know what collections to build*" (Kevin Phillip, Wapiti Regional Library, *Submission to the Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People*).

Many of the First Nations participants in the public consultations expressed concern about the deficiency in the extent and quality of their on-reserve library collections. The committee recommends that the regional libraries work with First Nations to ensure that on-reserve service points have collections equal in size and quality to those of branch libraries serving a population of similar size. It is important that on-reserve collections include quality Aboriginal materials, particularly materials relevant to the residents of the First Nations people.

The Advisory Committee heard that many public libraries in the province, including on-reserve service points, house insufficient collections of Aboriginal materials. The committee recommends that all public library systems work to develop quality collections of Aboriginal materials. Regional libraries were also encouraged to develop rotating blocks of Aboriginal materials for circulation through their branch libraries.

The Advisory Committee, during the public consultations, heard much concern about the inability of many librarians, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to find appropriate Aboriginal materials. Librarians experienced difficulties with knowing which materials would be recommended and where these materials can be purchased.

To assist libraries in developing quality Aboriginal collections, lists should be compiled of Aboriginal materials, recommended for public libraries, and not recommended for public libraries. The not recommended list should include outdated materials and materials with negative stereotypes. For examples of possible lists of recommended Aboriginal materials and inappropriate materials refer to web site addresses provided in section X, subsection C, of this report.

Web Site on Library Services for First Nations and Métis People

Recommendation:

41. That Provincial Library develop an Aboriginal component to the Saskatchewan Libraries Web Site.

In order to address the concern about the inability of many librarians and teachers, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to find appropriate Aboriginal materials, the committee recommends that an Aboriginal component be added to the Saskatchewan Libraries Web Site. Such a web site could include:

- List of Aboriginal materials recommended for public libraries (See Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's web site for possible children's materials, at www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/bib/prtv_e.html);
- List of materials not recommended, e.g. out-dated or containing negative stereotypes (e.g. See Oyate's web site, at www.oyate.org/books-to-aviod/index.html);
- A link to the list of school-level Aboriginal materials (See Saskatchewan Education's web site at http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/aboriginal/k_12_resources/toc.html);
- Publishers of Aboriginal materials (print, audio-visual, CD ROM);
- Library training opportunities for First Nations and Métis people, including announcements regarding upcoming workshops and conferences;
- Information relevant to operating a First Nations public library;
- Bulletin board for public library staff to post concerns and share solutions;
- Venue for concerns to be filtered to the Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples Committee;
- Information on ways for public libraries to be more welcoming to First Nations and Métis people;
- Model public libraries serving First Nations and Métis people;
- Aboriginal authors and their publications;
- List of all positions within the public library system, including a description of the duties and education level required;
- Links to other Aboriginal libraries and other relevant web sites;
- List of grant resources available to public libraries;

- Final report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People, and any follow-up activities.

The web site could act as a clearing house for Aboriginal materials, and help connect potential buyers with the publishers of Aboriginal materials.

The committee recommends that the Aboriginal Library Consultants co-ordinate the development and maintenance of the Aboriginal component of the Saskatchewan Libraries Web Site, with technical assistance from the Provincial Library.

Literacy

Recommendation:

42. That public libraries work with the First Nations and Métis communities to promote and enhance literacy initiatives among First Nations and Métis people.

> *"Libraries are food for the mind."* (Phyllis Lerat, Committee Member)
>
> *"Books and reading, and the whole library concept, are not part of daily life outside the school setting. The importance of literacy has not been instilled... There are problems understanding the printed word, as it is their second language, and coupled with the association of unpleasant school experiences, the idea of an adult reading for enjoyment, becomes remote."* (Ruth Healy, Peayamechikee Public Library, Pine House Lake, *Presentation to the Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People of Saskatchewan*)
>
> *"To reach the adults, you have to reach the kids."* (Lloyd Desjarlais, Education Councilor, Piapot Cree Nation)

At the public consultations, the Advisory Committee heard from participants of the First Nations and Métis communities that their people are experiencing low levels of literacy. The committee recommends that the public libraries work with the First Nations and Métis communities to develop strategies for increasing literacy among First Nations and Métis people and communities. Three types of literacy were identified:

- Reading literacy – ability to interpret, comprehend and convey the written word.
- Computer literacy – ability to interpret and operate computer software and programming.
- Information literacy – ability to search and locate information through a variety of venues.

Until very recently, the education system was criticized as unwelcoming to First Nations and Métis students. This history has not fostered the success of First Nations and Métis students and they continue to experience low graduation rates and low levels of literacy.

Low literacy levels may also be a result of the fact that English may not be the first language of many First Nations and Métis students. It becomes extremely challenging for students to thrive in an environment that does not accommodate their specific language needs.

The Advisory Committee recommends that initiatives be taken to promote family literacy. A parent is often their child's first educator, and the home environment can be tailored to foster a child's emerging literacy. Parents and children who spend time together reading are enhancing their literacy, the result being a family with strong reading skills. Communities that engage in family literacy initiatives are informed and healthy communities.

The Advisory Committee heard several suggestions to enhance literacy levels among First Nations and Métis people that could be carried out through public library service points. Libraries could host a story hour when staff or volunteers read to parents and children. Story hour might also incorporate the oral traditions of the local First Nations and Métis people. Reading partners could be engaged on a volunteer basis to promote literacy to children. A child may not have many books at home to help establish the habit of reading. Creation of reading circles, where each participant receives a book prize, may be a step to changing the situation and improving literacy.

To accommodate the needs of First Nations and Métis people whose first language is not English, the Advisory Committee recommends that public library collections include materials in the languages of the local First Nations and Métis people. Providing a variety of materials, including large print books, books written in Aboriginal languages and syllabics, and audio books would promote library use by Elders, and increase the value of literacy and attract First Nations and Métis people to public libraries.

Participants also expressed a desire to increase computer literacy. There is a lack of computers available in the home or for public use within many First Nations and Métis communities. Isolation of some First Nations and Métis communities was an identified barrier. The inability to make regular use of computers, the Internet, on-line catalogues, and other information resources, prevents First Nations and Métis people from increasing their computer and information literacy.

In public libraries where computer labs are available, it was recommended that computer training be made available and promoted in First Nations and Métis communities. An innovative idea currently being practiced at the Albert Branch of the Regina Public Library, is that young patrons are asked to complete ten minutes of computer training before they use the computers for other purposes. To enhance computer literacy in small communities and on First Nations, it is recommended that the option of a portable computer lab be explored.

To increase information literacy among First Nations and Métis people, the Advisory Committee recommends that increased training hours be offered to First Nations and Métis patrons. Library education hours could be held in the evenings to accommodate students and adults who cannot visit the public library during the day. Offering information training would familiarize First Nations and Métis patrons with how to locate information from a variety of locations and access collections to their fullest potential.

Where isolation is a barrier preventing certain First Nations and Métis people from visiting a public library service point, it is recommended that library services be brought to them, through programs such as books by mail, or a delivery service for the elderly. This would allow people who work and live on trap lines, those that are home schooled, or perhaps Elders who live in remote areas and are unable to travel, to access library services.

The committee further recommends that partnerships be explored to facilitate the promotion of literacy among First Nations and Métis people. Potential partners include existing literacy groups, and community organizations and programs, such as:

- Saskatchewan Reading Council,
- EGADZ (Saskatoon) and Street Culture Kids (Regina),
- Riversdale City Center (Saskatoon), and
- Aboriginal Head Start Programs,
- Regional Inter-Sectoral Committees.

Other potential partners include First Nations and Métis organizations, play schools and child care centres, and various governmental departments such as Industry Canada.

Regional libraries expressed jurisdiction problems in the delivery of literacy programming. In certain areas, literacy programming is the jurisdiction of the regional colleges. It is recommended that this issue of jurisdiction be investigated further.

The Advisory Committee believes that enhancing literacy among First Nations and Métis people will result in an increase in their comfort with using books on a regular basis, and will become more familiar with public library services. Enhanced literacy skills may contribute to the educational successes and overall well-being of the First Nations and Métis people.

Storytelling Week

Recommendation:

43. That an official Storytelling Week occur in February of each year, throughout the province to promote First Nations and Métis oral traditions and the use of public libraries.

The province of Ontario has established a First Nations Public Library Week. The second annual First Nations Public Library Week was held 12 February to 17 February 2001. It encourages First Nations public libraries to promote their resources and services to their communities through a variety of programming. The winter date respects the First Nations' traditional time for storytelling. The week in February supports a Valentine's Day theme of "Love Your Library."

The material for the 2001 First Nations Public Library Week include:

- A First Nations Public Library Week proclamation for signature by First Nations Chiefs (See Ontario Library Service – North's web site at http://olsnnt1.olsn.on.ca/olsn/firstnations/fnplweek.htm);

- A First Nations Public Library Week poster with the First Nations Public Library Week logo surrounded by the logos of the Ontario First (See Ontario Library Service – North's web site at http://olsnnt1.olsn.on.ca/olsn/firstnations/fnplweek.htm);
- A First Nations BINGO game to promote First Nations topics, such as language, symbols and practices and famous First Nations people.

The Advisory Committee recommends that a similar celebratory week be established in Saskatchewan to promote Aboriginal libraries. A Saskatchewan Storytelling Week may also include all libraries for First Nations and Métis people including the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre (SICC), and post-secondary institution libraries such as Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) and the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC).

Storytelling Week would function to promote oral traditions and histories of all that participate. However, the Advisory Committee recommends Storytelling Week in recognition of the strong historical oral tradition among First Nations and Métis people. The public libraries, by celebrating oral traditions would attract First Nations and Métis people into their libraries. Storytelling Week would be best hosted in February because the committee heard during discussion that February is traditionally when stories were told, and therefore, the most culturally appropriate time.

The Aboriginal Library Consultants at Provincial Library could be responsible for the development and the advertising for Storytelling Week.

Strategies for Libraries – Innovative Thinking

Recommendation:

44. That public libraries be encouraged to be innovative and creative in planning and implementing strategies for improving library services for First Nations and Métis people.

The Advisory Committee heard many innovative ideas to promote Aboriginal libraries and use of libraries by First Nations and Métis patrons. The committee recommends the adoption of these strategies. Many of the strategies were found to be in practice in various libraries throughout the province, or similar models used by other institutions or organizations. Those strategies implemented appear to have very successful results.

Options to Work at the Library in Lieu of Paying Fines. During the public consultations, the committee heard that fines for overdue library materials might discourage possible First Nations and Métis patrons from using the library. It was mentioned that certain First Nations and Métis patrons might not use library materials for fear of their inability to pay fines if the materials are overdue. In lieu of fines, libraries may offer options to work at the library. One possible task could be for libraries to ask older patrons to read to children during a story hour.

Paperback Trading Centres. Members of the public saw the establishment of informal paperback trading centres as a positive initiative. Books are often circulated informally on a First Nation.

Therefore, the establishment of a location where books could be traded may be useful in these communities. Previously read paperbacks and donations could be placed in a central location within First Nations and Métis communities. For example, paperbacks could be placed on a rack in the First Nation Council office, or within a community centre. There would be no formal monitoring of the books, and people could read them at their leisure.

Self-identification upon Application for a Public Library Card. It was proposed that a self-identification section be included in a public library card application. This would allow public libraries to measure First Nations and Métis participation and usage. The format for such a question could be modeled on the application to the University of Saskatchewan:

Aboriginal Ancestry
My ancestry is: Indian ❑ Métis ❑ Inuit ❑ Non-Aboriginal ❑

The information about Aboriginal ancestry may be released to libraries province-wide for the purposes of providing library services

Yes ❑ No ❑

Library Cards Available at First Nations Council Offices. The Advisory Committee heard that one barrier to First Nations participation in public libraries is the requirement of a parental signature for children under the age of 16 to obtain a library card. By going to a First Nation to issue library cards, this problem may be resolved. Public libraries could organize evenings when staff sign up First Nations residents for public library cards at the Council office.

Karaoke to Promote Literacy. Libraries may wish to host a karaoke and library night. Karaoke promotes reading and literacy because the song lyrics scroll across a screen. The librarian encourages people to leave the karaoke night with a library book.

> ***"A library book is the most inexpensive form of entertainment"*** **(Brenda Ahenakew, Director of Education, Saskatoon Tribal Council).**
>
> ***"People working in library systems know the valuable role libraries play in a community; however, often it is not communicated effectively to all levels of government or the general public. Libraries are more than just books, and this needs to be communicated more effectively to the public."*** **(Parkland Regional Library, *Brief from Parkland Regional Library to the Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Service for Aboriginal People*)**

Promotion of the Importance of Public Library Services.
A few participants at the public consultations were of the opinion that library services are not needed in First Nations and Métis communities. This, however, was a small minority opinion. Most participants felt that public libraries are very important and should be promoted within First Nations and Métis communities. The committee recommends that public libraries undertake initiatives to promote the importance of library services. Such initiatives could include outreach to First Nations to raise awareness about the importance and usefulness of library services. It is

essential that First Nations and Métis people understand the importance and the benefit of libraries for First Nations and Métis communities. Libraries can help instill a love of reading in First Nations and Métis families and communities. The Aboriginal Library Consultants may be in the position to organize and develop this type of outreach program. As well, it was suggested that First Nations Chiefs be used as role models in a media campaign to promote libraries.

Improved Public Library Access for Aboriginal Peoples Award.

The Provincial Library currently co-ordinates a Library Access Award Competition in conjunction with the National Access Awareness Week. The Library Access Award is held annually and is designed to encourage libraries in the province to work toward making library resources, services and facilities more accessible to people with disabilities. The competition is open to all libraries: public, school, college, university, government and special libraries. Winners of the Library Access Award are recognized at the National Access Awareness Week Awards ceremonies where they receive a trophy and a plaque. A similar annual award could be explored in the form of an Improved Public Library Access for Aboriginal Peoples Award. This award would honor public libraries that have made the most improvement in making their resources and services available to Aboriginal peoples.

Needs Assessment. Libraries may not be considered a priority for leaders of First Nations communities, particularly as they struggle with more urgent priorities. It is recommended that public libraries perform needs assessments on the communities they serve to determine the priorities. Moreover, the Advisory Committee recommends that libraries work to provide materials to allow communities to better address their priorities. In other words, libraries become a *means* to addressing the priorities and needs of the communities. The committee advises that partnerships be established to provide quality programs. Possible needs may include informational materials about health issues, including Diabetes, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Effect, and AIDS; business development; land claims; crime and criminal justice system, etc.

Partnerships with Community Organizations. It is important that public libraries work to establish partnerships with community organizations in order to provide quality service. This concept has been repeated a number of times throughout the report for a variety of different programs and services. The committee wishes to stress the importance of partnerships to promote community involvement in the libraries, as well as to allow for the development of programs designed specifically to meet the needs of community members.

Community Van Delivery Service. The committee heard a strong preference for bookmobile service by First Nations in certain areas of the province however it was also suggested by members of the public library community that bookmobile service is extremely costly and therefore difficult to accommodate. A possible solution is to provide First Nations with a computer that is connected to the public library catalogue thereby allowing the residents to do searches and make specific orders through interlibrary loan. Van delivery of requested materials would reduce the costs of transporting large volumes of materials to several communities and accommodate the needs of First Nations who request a portable library service.

IX. NEXT STEPS

Recommendations:

45. That the minister direct the Provincial Library to work with the public library community and the Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples Committee, and any other appropriate groups, to develop an action plan to ensure progress in the implementation of these recommendations.

46. That in five years, there be a review of progress, that includes public consultations and a report to the minister.

> *"Saskatchewan is a great province, blessed with a beautiful and productive land in which we can all prosper. Libraries are an important part of the future, as they are every person's free university. Free public libraries only work if they are free and available to everybody, without exception or discrimination."* (Louise Cochran, Lakeland Library Region, Brief presented to Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People)

The primary intent of the Advisory Committee's recommendations is to achieve universal access and to begin the process of improving access and delivery of public library services for First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan. First Nations and Métis people must be involved in this development and First Nations must retain responsibility for developing and funding on-reserve public library services, in cooperation with regional libraries and the federal government.

The committee strives to propose recommendations that are consistent with Provincial Library's objective to provide a public library system with equitable access to global information and learning resources throughout the province. As well, the Advisory Committee has worked within the goal of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and its recommendations promote the idea that "Saskatchewan [is] rich with the spirit of community and cultural experiences."

The Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People submits this report to the Honourable Ron Osika, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

APPENDIX A – List of Committee Members

Ava Bear
Co-Chair
Consultant; Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Representative
Muskoday First Nation

Wendy Sinclair
Co-Chair
Albert Branch Librarian
Regina Public Library
Regina

Donna Ahenakew
Acting Library Director
Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre
Saskatoon

Suzy Bear
Librarian, Northern Campus
Saskatchewan Indian Federated College
Prince Albert

Marilyn Belhumeur
Librarian
Gabriel Dumont Institute
Regina

Joylene Campbell
Acting Provincial Librarian
Provincial Library
Regina

Louise Cochran
Regional Library Board Chair
Lakeland Library Region
Livelong

Eric Jenkins
Library Consultant
Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs
Regina

Allan Johnson
Library Director
Southeast Regional Library
Weyburn

Valerie Laliberte
Teacher; Northern and Native Representative on Multitype Library Board
Beauval

Maureen Lerat
Senior Policy Analyst
Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs
Regina

Phyllis Lerat
Director of Information Services
Saskatchewan Indian Federated College
Regina

Edna Mirasty
Library Technician
Senator Myles Venne School
Air Ronge

Harriet Roy
Teacher-Librarian
Pahkisimon Nuye?áh Library System
La Ronge

Zenen Zuzak
Library Director
Saskatoon Public Library
Saskatoon

The committee was assisted in its work by Provincial Library Staff:

- **Marilyn Jenkins**, Acting Director - Public Library Services
- **Deanna Haviland**, Student
- **Erin Hunt**, Student

APPENDIX B - Public Consultations Participants

Eleanor Acorn – John M. Cuelenaere Public Library†
Brenda Ahenakew – Saskatoon Tribal Council*
Cynthia Bakker – File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council*
Alvina Baptiste – Red Pheasant✣
Jeff Barber – Southeast Regional Library*
Karen Basky – Palliser Regional Library*♠
Judy Bear – Battleford Tribal Council Education♠
Mavis Bellisle – Wapiti Regional Library†
Joe Bergerman – Northern Lights School Division✣
Blanche Bird – Montreal Lake†
Lorraine Bucsis – Parkland Regional Library*
Isabelle Butters – Southeast Regional Library*
Judy Chepil – Waterhen Lake School✣
Louise Cochran – Lakeland Library Region✣
Anne Craggs – Saskatoon Public Library❁
Deirdre Crichton – Parkland Regional Library*❁
Peter Curtis – Southeast Regional Library*
Sharon Daniels – Sturgeon Lake Central School†
Joan Delouse – Aboriginal Head Start Program – Yorkton♠
Theresa Dery – La Ronge Public Library✣
Lloyd Desjarlais – Piapot First Nation*
Melba Desjarlais – Fishing Lake First Nation*
Gordon Dumbe – Wood Mountain First Nation♠
Bryan Foran – Saskatoon Public Library (Rusty MacDonald Branch)❁
Linda Fritz – University of Saskatchewan Libraries❁
Bob Gerow – Agency Chiefs Tribal Council†
Larry Goldade – Prince Albert Grand Council†
Annemarie Hillson – North Battleford Library✣
Larry Huber – File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council♠
Marjorie Kennedy – SIAST*
Mark Klein – Clearwater River Dene School✣
Carol Lafond – Muskeg Lake Cree Nation❁
Victoria Lasas – Waterhen Lake School✣
Anne Lindsay – Southeast Regional Library*
Rosemary Loeffler – La Ronge Public Library❁
Audrey Mark - Pahkisimon Nuye·áh Library System✣
Jocelyn Mark – La Ronge Public Library❁
Cathy Matyas – Regina Public Library♠
Wayne McKenzie, Aboriginal Affairs*
Kathleen McNab – Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services♠
Gloria Mehlmann – Regina Public Library♠
Brian Mertz – Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology*
Tammy Mirasty – Linking Community Voices, Regina Health District♠

Attended Meeting at:

✣ Jackfish Lodge
† Prince Albert
✣ Beauval
* Fort Qu'Appelle
❁ Saskatoon
♠ Regina

Laureen Musqua – Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services♠
Faron Noname – Piapot First Nation✱
Ralph Paul – Meadow Lake Tribal Council✣
Kevin Phillip – Wapiti Regional Library†
Nancy Rabbitskin – Big River First Nation†
Lucy Ratt – Keethanow (Stanley Mission)†
Crystal Rokosh – File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council✱
Brenda Roberts – Peter Ballantyne Education Department†
Gregory Salmers – Southeast Regional Library✱
Audrey Sanderson – Red Earth First Nation Library❁
Herb Sanderson – James Smith Cree Nation†
Barb Saylor – Regina Public Library♠
Jack Severson – Saskatchewan Indian Federated College♠
Dwayne Smith – Kopahawakenum School (Flying Dust First Nation)✣
Jan Smith – Palliser Regional Library✱♠
Elayne Smokyday – Kinistin First Nation School†
Linda Standing – White Bear Education Complex♠
Brian Suetta - Pahkisimon Nuye·áh Library System❁
Jannay Thiessen – Southeast Regional Library✱
Joan Thomson – Buffalo River School✣
Darlene Weenie – Chief Poundmaker School✣
Doris Wesequate – Piapot First Nations♠
Lorraine Woynarski – Muskowekwan Band #85♠
Becky Yuzicappi – File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council✱
Jane Zhang – Saskatoon Public Library (Rusty MacDonald Branch)❁

APPENDIX C - Abbreviations

CLA	Canadian Library Association
FSIN	Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
GDI	Gabriel Dumont Institute
IAA	Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
LSSAP	Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples Committee
MAH	Municipal Affairs and Housing (previously Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing – MACH)
MLIS	Master's Degree in Library and Information Science
MLS	Master's Degree in Library Science
MN-S	Métis Nation - Saskatchewan
OLS	Ontario Library Service (SOLS – Southern Ontario Library Service; OLS-N – Ontario Library Service-North)
PNLS	Pahkisimon Nuye·áh Library System
RIC	Regional Inter-Sectoral Committee
SIAST	Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
SICC	Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre
SIFC	Saskatchewan Indian Federated College
SIIT	Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology
SLA	Saskatchewan Library Association
SLTA	Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association

APPENDIX D – Glossary of Terms

Terms Related to Libraries

Basic library services – Access to catalogues and information, library materials, library borrowing privileges in all public libraries province-wide (reciprocal borrowing), and ability to request to borrow materials from other libraries on interlibrary loan. For a more detailed definition, see *The Public Libraries Regulations, 1996,* section 3.

Equitable access – All people have access to a fair level of service, although the means of delivery may vary; e.g. it is impossible to duplicate the resources of a large public library in every small branch library across Saskatchewan to create equal service, but it is possible to provide access to all library resources in other ways.

A library is any organized collection of printed books and periodicals or of any other graphic, electronic, or audio-visual materials, AND the services of a staff to provide and facilitate the use of such materials or of any other information sources required to meet the informational, research, educational, cultural or recreational needs of its users. A public library serves the population of a community or region and is established through *The Public Libraries Act, 1996.* They are supported by tax dollars.

Resource sharing commonly refers to libraries exchanging books or other library materials in organized ways such as block exchanges, interlibrary loan and reciprocal borrowing. However, many other resources of libraries can also be shared, such as staff expertise, training opportunities, cooperative purchase of expensive information databases, etc.

Universal access – All residents of Saskatchewan may use public library services without exception.

❁ ❁ ❁

Terms Related to Aboriginal Peoples

Aboriginal peoples – The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The *1982 Canadian Constitution* defines Aboriginal peoples to include First Nations (Indians), Inuit and Métis peoples.

Elder – A man or woman whose wisdom about spirituality, culture and life is recognized. Not all Elders are "old". The Aboriginal community and individuals will normally seek the advice and assistance of Elders in various areas of traditional as well as contemporary issues.

First Nation – A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian", which many found offensive. Although the term "First Nation" is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to the descendants of the original inhabitants of Canada.

Indian Band (First Nation) – A group of First Nations people for whom lands have been set apart and money is held by the Crown. Each band elects its own governing band council, usually consisting of one Chief and Councilors. Today, many bands prefer to be known as First Nations. *In this document, the term First Nations has been used to describe Indian bands or Indian reserves.*

Indian – Describes Aboriginal peoples in Canada who are not Inuit or Métis people. There are three legal definitions that apply to First Nations people in Canada: Status, Non-Status and Treaty.

- Status – Registered or entitled to be registered under the *Indian Act*. The Act sets out the requirements for determining who is a Status Indian.
- Non-Status – Not entitled to be registered under the *Indian Act*.
- Treaty – Registered with a First Nation whose ancestors signed a treaty with the Crown and as a result are entitled to treaty benefits.

Reserve – Land set aside by the federal government through the *Indian Act* or through treaties for the use of a specific band or First Nation. The band council has "exclusive user rights" to the land, but the land is "owned" by the Crown. The *Indian Act* states this land cannot be owned by individual band members.

The above definitions were based on definitions in the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative Employer Toolkit, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1998).

Métis people – An Aboriginal person who self-identifies as Métis, distinct from First Nation and Inuit; who is a descendant of those Métis who received or were entitled to receive land grants and/or scrip under the provisions of the *Manitoba Act (1870)* or the *Dominion Lands Act*; or a person who is accepted by the Métis Nation (as outlined in the Métis Nation Accord).